

GADSDEN COUNTY
TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
MINUTES FOR
Monday, April 20, 2015
Regular Meeting: 3:30 pm

Present:

Keith Dowdell, City of Quincy Commissioner, Chair of TDC
Lee Garner, City of Chattahoochee Manager and Tax Collector
Jeff DuBree, Sportsman's Lodge, Bed Tax Collector - Lake Talquin (arrived late)
Peter Patel, Hotel Industry
David Knight, Midway Councilman
Brenda Holt, BOCC
Lynn Badger, Bed Tax Collector – Havana
Joe Bouch, Chisano via Skype
Sonya Burns, TDC Administrative Assistant
Attorney David Weiss
Beryl Wood, Deputy Clerk

Absent:

Clarence Jackson, City of Gretna, Vice – Chair of TDC
Matt Thro, H & H Furniture
Allara Gutcher, Planning Director/TDC Administrator

1. Pledge of Allegiance/Roll Call

Keith Dowdell, Chairman of TDC called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. with a quorum present and then led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Amendments to and Approval of the Agenda

There were no amendments to the agenda.

3. Approval of Minutes (March 16th 2015)

UPON MOTION BY MR. KNIGHT AND SECOND BY MR. GARNER, THE COUNCIL VOTED 6 -0, BY VOICE VOTE, FOR APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 16, 2015 MINUTES.

4. General Business

a. Presentation of Gadsden Art Center Report

Grace Robinson, Gadsden Art Center, came before the Council and presented a power – point that included the Annual Report 2014. She asked how we can help brand Gadsden

County. They have already started using the new logo. She asked for support from the Council for the FY 2015-2016 - \$1,500 per quarter (\$6,000 for the year).

Mrs. Holt stated they are looking for historical sites and unique locations within the County.

Jeff DuBree arrived at this juncture of the meeting 3:35pm.

Mrs. Robinson said they could help get the word out.

Mr. DuBree discussed the possibility of a Welcome Center, could advance the partnership with the County.

Mrs. Malloy said they would be happy to assist.

Joe Munroe of Mainstreet addressed the Commission and said they would be looking at signage and banners for directions to different venues in the City. He thanked Mrs. Holt for the line item for BOCC. He said they were looking to partner with County for The City of Quincy.

Chair Dowdell asked what you are doing to get on the band wagon "Do Something Original." He thanked them for their service.

Mrs. Robinson we are currently finishing our credentials to become nationally and will partner with a sister show with the Metropolitan Museum.

MainStreet Council:

Chair Dowdell asked have they done their application for the TDC.

Joe Munroe said they only pursued the Money from the County at this point.

b. Quincyfest Funding Request

- ◆ Bernard O. Piawah, City of Quincy - Building and Planning Department came before the Council and requested funding for the Quincyfest for Saturday, May 2, 2015. He said the theme was Blues and Bar – B – Que. He asked for \$6,000. He asked for ongoing support of the Council.

Mr. Patel stated there were no rooms available due to graduation weekend for the Blues and Bar – B – Que. He asked them to keep that in mind for future planning, suggested another weekend.

Mr. Knight asked in the past with events, have they done surveys.

Mr. Piawah said they haven't in the past, but they will this year.

Mr. Munroe stated he was friends with Mrs. Selwah that did the first MainStreet and the 1st Quincyfest attendance was in 1998 and it had 15,000 people in attendance, which was one of the largest for this particular event.

Attorney Weiss said given the current guidelines the maximum amount of grant funding is \$2500. He said it's based on room nights. He discussed the \$5,000 maximum for marketing.

He asked Chair Dowdell to recuse himself from voting.

Mr. Dowdell asked how they could get this in the budget.

Mrs. Holt said the hospitality cards solve a lot of problems.

Mr. Dowdell suggested for example if you give \$10,000 to each municipality if they spend \$ 6,000 then it reverts back to the Council.

Mr. Patel expressed the importance that TDC support is for 3 years and then they are on their own.

Attorney Weiss said \$2500 is the maximum for the grant funding. If you want to give them more than \$2500, then don't limit the mile radius. He suggested funding after the fact, once the Strategic Plan is changed.

Mrs. Holt said let's do the \$2,500 and reimburse the rest.

Mr. Garner said unless we change the Strategic Plan, they need 100 bed nights.

Attorney Weiss said yes, they would need 100 room nights to get the \$2,500.

Mr. DuBree said this event has been great in the past. How can you effectively market when they are just asking for the funding?

UPON MOTION BY MRS. HOLT AND SECOND BY MR. GARNER, THE COUNCIL VOTED 5 – 2, BY VOICE VOTE, TO APPROVE \$2500 FOR GRANT FUNDING AND \$1500 FOR MARKETING. (Chair Dowdell abstained from voting due to it being a City of Quincy sponsored event. Mr. DuBree and Ms. Badger voted against the motion.)

c. Review/Adoption of TDC Strategic Plan

Joe Bouch, Chisano Group discussed via Skype he recalled the budget was to be added to plan to make it more applicable. He referenced the addition to the Grant Funding portion was also included. He suggested a Grant Committee be formed. He said the Plan is more applicable now that the Budget has been added.

Attorney Weiss said the additions make it comply with the statute. He said there were just a few items the statute required that weren't included in the Plan previously. He mentioned now it complies with the Plan.

Mrs. Burns discussed the 3 year limitation.

Mr. Patel voiced his concern with the 3 year limitations. He said they should be able to support themselves after 3 years.

Mr. DuBree said he would rather have one grant fund instead of the two now listed.

Attorney Weiss commented on Page 15 Mrs. Gutcher prepared and he reviewed. He explained the allocations are the 50 percent would be more generally used for promoting or marketing the County (Gadsden) not event specific. The Grant Event Fund is when you are one of the sponsors of an event. The Marketing Fund is when they are reimbursed for advertisement. He stated those were the three different pots. He said there was nothing in place that prohibits someone from seeking funding from all 3 pots but, it was totally up to the TDC to decide whether they would grant it. He said whatever policy decisions they make are entirely up to the TDC. He recalled prior discussions they have had information in the prior plan but, never followed it he suggested they not make rules that they don't follow. "If you want more flexibility they can have more flexibility. You can take applications on a case by case basis." Having criteria is a good idea, how specific you want to make that criterion is up to the Council.

Mr. Knight discussed decreasing in funding each year. He acknowledged he was in favor of keeping that particular language. He asked are they eligible for grant funding after 3 years, if they produce the bed nights. He said in the past they were not tracking bed nights. He said Ms. Burns mentioned earlier that she now calls after particular events and track the bed nights.

Ms. Burns said that she was provided post – event forms that where to be turned in 45 days after the event. She said the last couple of events funded by the TDC the applicants did return the post event forms. She said only one provided bed night information and that was Mrs. Carolyn Ford with NFEDC, the remaining applicants only provided the attendance.

Mr. Dowdell suggested it be case by case basis decided by the Council.

Mr. Dowdell said 3 years maximum funding and after 3 years if they can prove bed nights. Find language that will fit our county size.

Attorney Weiss suggested the Plan as written has more general guidelines and it does say on page 11 as written, there is more development of criteria in the form of an application. He said there was ways you could do it by modifying the application. He said there had been many discussions about how the application limits and what could be done. He recommended they add something to the effect of any applicant (event and marketing funds) would receive the 3 year maximum funding unless they provide bed nights to be considered for funding. He said that language could be added to the Plan.

Mrs. Holt said they could do that contingent upon that being put in the Plan. She suggested changing the chart. She said they should also look at the limits on bed nights.

Mr. Garner came up with numbers that he proposed to the Council. Less than 10 bed nights you receive nothing, 11-25 bed nights would receive \$1000 and 26 plus would receive \$2000.

Ms. Badger asked what other criteria would be needed for bed night funding.

Mr. Patel said that you could attach a maximum amount.

Mrs. Holt said she didn't want to limit 3 year TDC funded events and it should be specified in Strategy 5.1 – Spending allocations, as it relates to overall budget.

Attorney Weiss commented you want to decide as a body if the Tourism and Marketing 50% allocation that is a general fund of money. The grant event fund is grant specific, those would be TDC sponsored events. He said what he thinks Mrs. Holt is saying is that they don't want to limit yourself on TDC sponsored events; you want to be able to decide as a body what you want to do. He said it can be in your budget (unlimited) or not in budget it's a maximum of \$5000. The limitation is on the marketing funds. They would not be TDC sponsored events; they would be events that you are helping to market.

Mrs. Holt asked could TDC buy signs.

Attorney Weiss said yes you can. He said it would be between the tourism and marketing general fund if it weren't specific to an event or if you sponsor an event then it can be sponsored by the TDC. He said you couldn't do that for the marketing funds.

Mr. Knight thanked Mrs. Holt for asking the questions for clarity.

Mrs. Holt said they want to market Gadsden County, it's their job.

Mr. DuBree suggested coming up with plan to separate funding from general funding that is not event specific. For example, if you were just going to market the City of Quincy for its architectural and different aspects. He mentioned Sumpter County (Point scale system), stating

it was similar to Gadsden. He stated they have a clause that states if room nights can't be generated, the TDC may recommend that the BOCC fund the organization based on its impact on the economy using evaluation criteria. Less than 25 rooms you're eligible for \$1,000. 25-50; 51-75 and the upper level if it's over 100 there is no limit, it's at the discretion of the TDC. He said they were leaving a loop hole at the top and the bottom. He commented that was a clever way to stay consistent if an event comes to us and they produce 25 nights. For example, they suggest \$2500 for marginal impact for 25-50 rooms. The 3 year clause was also discussed if event has been funded by the TDC for 3 consecutive years a recommendation would be made to reduce the funding by a maximum of 50% of the prior year's funding amount or 100% of the current year's funding request and each year it would progressively go down.

Chair Dowdell asked that Mr. DuBree share that information with the Attorney.

Mrs. Holt said she liked that and she was in favor of having something in place today for applicants. She liked the numbers given by Mr. Garner and came up with her for the suggested bednights: 10 and under - \$1,000, 11-25 - \$2,000, 26-50 - \$2,500 and 50+above -\$3,000.

Attorney Weiss said they could approve once and recommend approval to the BOCC or approve contingent upon changes to the Strategic Plan. Then it would be forwarded to the BOCC.

Chair Dowdell asked the Council to decide what they would like to do with the Strategic Plan.

Attorney Weiss said working with Mrs. Gutcher that maybe by the 2nd meeting in May they would be finished with all changes mentioned in the Strategic Plan.

Ms. Burns reminded the Council they would have to have a 1st Public Hearing and adopt an Ordinance.

Attorney Weiss clarified the 3 years without any limitation if after 3 years they are applying then any funding approval would be contingent upon them producing evidence after the event.

Mr. DuBree motioned to approve the Strategic Plan with the two additions they added the 3 year criteria to 5.3. It was tabled for discussion.

Mr. DuBree said that was not what he had in mind. His suggestion was to place the 3 years in there and have the committee come up with suggestions such as Sumpter County, by still getting funding without having bed nights. He said the numbers for the table could be decided by the committee. The criteria should still be in there from the get go.

Attorney Weiss asked did they want that in the plan or in the application.

Mr. DuBree said the table would go in the application.

Attorney Weiss stated what they would be adding to 5.3; any funding shall be limited to a maximum of years. He asked for clarity did he want that entire page added.

Mr. DuBree said this is the language he wanted added to 5.3; if an event has been funded by the TDC for 3 consecutive years a recommendation would be made reducing funding to a maximum of 50% of the prior year's funding amount or 100% of the current year's spending request, whichever is less. The methodology will continue each and thereafter until such time the funding level reaches \$0.00 or the organization becomes self sufficient, whichever comes first. (Moted language to be added to 5.3)

UPON MOTION BY MR. DUBREE AND SECOND BY MS. BADGER, THE COUNCIL VOTED 7 – 0, BY VOICE VOTE, TO APPROVE THE STRATEGIC PLAN AS IS AND ADD THE ABOVE PARAGRAPH TO 5.3.

5. Report(s) from County Attorney - David Weiss, BOCC Attorney

Attorney Weiss had no additional report.

6. Items of discussion from Council members (no vote items)

Lee Garner asked the Council to continue the funding for Riverway South for FY 2105-2016 for \$5,000.

Ms. Burns announced the next meeting would not be a regular meeting, but a public workshop scheduled for May 4, 2015 – Budget Workshop. She said she would send that date to their partners because this is the meeting they would need to attend for next year's funding request.

Attorney Weiss suggested the meeting should be sometime after May 19, 2015 date. He said it would be good to have the new Plan, it would be beneficial.

Chair Dowdell suggested contacting each municipality to let them know they need to attend the meetings.

Mrs. Holt asked could we set aside a \$1,000 for advertising marketing of the Workshop to encourage citizen's that would like to solicit funding to let them know this would be the meeting.

Mr. DuBree said when Leon County has their grant cycle it is done once a year. They do some pretty heavy campaigning to let the community know when the grant cycles are, application deadlines and meeting dates.

UPON MOTION BY MRS. HOLT AND SECOND BY MR. KNIGHT, THE COUNCIL VOTED 7 – 0, BY VOICE VOTE, TO APPROVE THE TDC COUNCIL FUNDING FOR \$1,000 FOR ADVERTISING OF THE BUDGET WORKSHOP.

7. **Public Comments**

There were no additional public comments.

8. **Next meeting(s):**

Budget Workshop May 4, 2015 @ 3:30p.m.

Information only:

- ◆ Current Budget/Expenditure Report

Adjournment

**THERE BEING NO ADDITIONAL COMMENTS, THE CHAIR DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED
AT 5:30 P.M.**

GADSDEN COUNTY, FL

KEITH DOWDELL, TDC CHAIR

ATTEST:

BERYL H. WOOD, DEPUTY CLERK